

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 01125 242123Z

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ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-11 FMC-04 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 DLOS-06

PM-07 L-03 NEA-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

MBFR-04 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 DRC-01 /146 W

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R 241810Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3987

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USEC BRUSSELS

USOECD PARIS 523

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

CINCLANT

COMICEDFOR

NISRA/KEFLAVIK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR IC UK

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: SHIP COLLISION RELATIONS WITH BRITISH

REF: A. REYKJAVIK 1095 B. REYKJAVIK 1111

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. GOI CABINET REJECTED BRITISH PROPOSAL FOR
INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION OF COLLISION INCIDENTS SEPT 21.
GOI POSITION IS THAT BLAME WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY ICELANDIC
MARITIME COURT AND GOVT WILL MAKE DECISION ON RELATIONS WITH
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PAGE 02 REYKJA 01125 242123Z

BRITISH DEPENDING ON FINDINGS. TWO COLLISIONS TOOK PLACE SEPT

22 BETWEEN BRITISH FRIGATE AND ICELANDIC COAST GUARD CUTTER.
MARITIME COURT WILL CONVENE SEPT 25 TO CONSIDER EVIDENCE END
SUMMARY.

2. ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MET SEPT 20 AND
AGREED TO RECOMMEND TO GOI THAT BRITISH PROPOSAL (REF A) PRO-
POSING APPOINTMENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH BLAME
IN SHIP COLLISIONS BE REJECTED. GOI CABINET MET SEPT 21ST
AND ACCEPTED THIS ADVICE. GOI POSITION IS THAT FACTS REGARDING
SHIP COLLISIONS WILL NOW BE SUBMITTED TO ICELANDIC MARITIME
COURT. COURT WILL BE ASKED TO ESTABLISH BLAME. IF BLAME RESTS
WITH BRITISH THEN GOI WILL PROCEED WITH PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED
DECISION TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BRITISH.

3. DURING AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 22 TWO COLLISIONS TOOK PLACE
BETWEEN THE BRITISH FRIGATE LINCOLN AND THE ICELANDIC COAST
GUARD CUTTER AEGIR OFF THE EAST COAST OF ICELAND. FOLLOWING IS
ICELANDIC COAST GUARD COMMUNIQUE REGARDING THE INCIDENT:

"SEPTEMBER 22, 1973

"A COLLISION TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE BRITISH FRIGATE LINCOLN
F-99 AND THE GUNBOAT AEGIR OFF THE EASTFJORDS TODAY AT 1505
HOURS. THIS MORNING THE SHIPS HAD BEEN SAILING PARALLEL
FOR OVER ONE HOUR AND THE FRIGATE HAD MADE NO ATTEMPT TO RAM
THE GUNBOAT. AT 1505 HOURS TODAY THE FRIGATE SUDDENLY RAMMED
THE GUNBOAT ON THE STARBOARD SIDE OF THE BOW. THE GUNBOAT SUS-
TAINED LITTLE DAMAGE. AT THAT TIME NO TRAWLER WAS AT A
LESSER DISTANCE THAN 2.5 NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE
SHIPS. THIS INCIDENT TOOK PLACE ABOUT 31 NAUTICAL MILES WITHIN
THE FISHERY LIMITS OFF NORDFJARDARHORN. "AT 1600 HOURS TODAY
ANOTHER COLLISION TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE SAME SHIPS ABOUT 18
NAUTICAL MILES EAST OF NORDFJARDARHORN, I.E., ABOUT 32 NAUTICAL
MILES WITHIN THE FISHERY LIMITS. THE BRITISH FRIGATE LINCOLN
SAILED ALONGSIDE THE GUNBOAT ON THE STARBOARD SIDE AND TURNED
SUDDENLY TO PORT IN FRONT OF THE GUNBOAT. THE GUNBOAT SET FULL
ASTERN AND TURNED AWAY THEREBY TRYING TO AVOID A COLLISION.
THIS WAS UNSUCCESSFUL AND THE SHIPS COLLIDED. AS IN THE FORMER
COLLISION THERE WERE 2.5 NAUTICAL MILES TO THE NEAREST TRAWLER.
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PAGE 03 REYKJA 01125 242123Z

THE DAMAGE SUSTAINED BY THE GUNBOAT IN THE LATTER COLLISION
WAS SOMEWHAT GREATER THAN IN THE FORMER. IT WAS PRIMARILY TO
THE RAILING AND FOUR HULL RIBS WERE BENT CLOSE TO THE TOP OF THE
BOW. THERE WAS NO INJURY TO HUMANS.

"A MARITIME COURT INQUIRY WILL BE HELD BECAUSE OF THE COLLI-
SIONS AND AS IN EARLIER COURT INQUIRIES BECAUSE OF THE RAMMINGS
BY TUGBOATS AND FRIGATES, THE BRITISH WILL BE INVITED TO SEND

DELEGATES TO THE PROCEEDINGS, BUT HITHERTO THEY HAVE SEEN NO
REASON TO BE REPRESENTED THERE."

4. ACCORDING TO REPORTS EVENING SEPT 22ND PRIMIN JOHANNESSON
ANNOUNCED THAT MARITIME COURT WOULD BE CONVENED ON
FOLLOWING DAY. IT HAS NOW BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT COURT WILL NOT
MEET UNTIL SEPT 25TH, OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE OF NEED TO GATHER
EVIDENCE.

5. ICELANDIC TELEVISION EVENING SEPTEMBER 23RD PROJECTED FILMS
TAKEN FROM COAST GUARD AIRCRAFT WHICH REPORTEDLY SHOWED THAT
BRITISH FRIGATE TRAVELLING AT MUCH HIGHER SPEED THAN ICE-
LANDIC CUTTER MANEUVERED IN FRONT OF IT CAUSING COLLISION TO
OCCUR. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT "EVIDENCE" SUCH AS THIS WILL PRO-
BABLY WEIGH HEAVILY IN MARITIME COURT'S FINDINGS.

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